

congressional Republicans will meekly accede to the President's demands without asking for even the slightest degree of accountability from the White House in return.

We in Congress must do more than just rubber stamp the President's every last wish. We hold the power of the purse; and, accordingly, we must exercise our constitutional authority to hold the executive branch accountable. Up to now, the Congress has failed to hold the Bush administration accountable for the many mishaps and mistakes in Iraq; and, as a result, the Members of Congress, all 535 of us, are responsible for the nearly 1,500 American troops who have been needlessly killed in Iraq, not to mention the 11,000 Americans who have been forever wounded and the untold thousands of Iraqi civilians who have died in this war.

Before appropriating a single dollar for the Iraq war, more than we have already appropriated, Congress must demand that President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld tell Congress exactly what they plan to do to address the growing crisis in Iraq. Demanding accountability from the Bush administration crosses over political lines because it is about more than just politics. It is about taking care of our men and women who are serving in Iraq, and it is about advancing policies that will secure America for the future.

Together, with 27 of my House colleagues, I have introduced House Concurrent Resolution 35, an Iraq withdrawal plan, that has four components. President Bush needs to address, at the very least, each of these important components before Congress provides him any further funds for Iraq.

First, the President needs to begin the process of bringing our troops home. How can we possibly ask these brave men and women, who have selflessly answered the call of duty for their country, to continue to die for an unjust, unfair, and poorly planned military failure halfway across the world? These are the troops the administration assured us would be embraced as liberators, but who continue to be the focal point of anti-American extremism, leaving them like sitting ducks.

In fact, I believe the insurgency in Iraq is fueled primarily by our military presence. Ceasing the military operations will not be sufficient to defeat the insurgency, no way, but staying will continue to intensify it, and that is for certain.

Second, President Bush needs to develop and implement a plan for Iraq's civil and economic infrastructure. The U.S. has a moral responsibility to clean up the mess we made in Iraq, but that responsibility needs to be fulfilled not by our military but by humanitarian groups and companies that will help rebuild Iraq's infrastructure; and all future investments must be made with the needs of Iraqis being paramount, not the United States Government contractors and other war profiteers.

Third, the President must convene an emergency meeting of Iraq's leadership, Iraq's neighbors, and the United Nations to create an international peacekeeping force in Iraq and to replace U.S. military forces with Iraqi police and national guard forces to ensure Iraq's security. With Iraq's security problems the most serious cause for concern in the country at the moment, an international peacekeeping force in place of the U.S. military would better serve Iraq's needs.

An international peacekeeping force, supported by Iraq's neighbors and the United Nations, would provide real legitimacy to a conflict that has flown in the face of international law from the very beginning.

Finally, the President must take all steps to provide the Iraqi people the opportunity to control their internal affairs. The Iraqi people cannot truly control their own affairs until the U.S. military has ceded back authority to the Iraqi people. That is why it is essential for Iraq's police and national guard forces to manage Iraq's security, not the American military.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SECURING OUR BORDERS & TIGHTENING NOOSE ON PERPETRATORS OF SENSELESS VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, just last October, FBI agents, in cooperation with Baytown, Texas, and LaPorte, Texas, police, both law enforcement departments in my district, shattered a major document forgery operation being run out of a trailer house just across the street from the massive Exxon Mobile Refinery in Baytown, Texas. The result: six men were arrested and charged with numerous Federal counts of conspiracy and producing false documents, including Texas driver's licenses, resident alien cards, and industrial safety training cards used for employment in the strategic petrochemical industry.

The REAL ID Act that our Chamber passed today was a sensible first step toward desperately needed immigration reform in the United States. Still, however, in order to truly construct a watertight system, we cannot, when legislating here in Congress, just hitch our wagon to the newest pony when we have a solid team of stallions sitting around with nothing to do. Before discussion of any new proposals or their benefits, we must first ensure the laws currently on the books are being en-

forced. We must expect people from other nations to respect our borders.

Not only is it essential that we enforce existing laws; we must also reduce the incentives we offer foreigners to come to our country illegally. CNN reported a short time after the forgery bust I just mentioned that precious American dollars are being hijacked on unreimbursed medical care and education for illegal aliens who, in the darkness of the night, manage to come across our borders.

Have Texas and other border States merely become free HMOs for illegals, with Americans, many of whom do not even have their own medical care, paying the cost?

Similarly, in the Washington Times, they had an article dealing with the invasion of illegal immigrants and the exorbitant cost to taxpayers in the health care and prison areas. It was reported that one in every four uninsured people in the United States is illegal. Moreover, its study revealed that in 2000 alone States like Texas, which are on the Mexican border, have losses in almost \$190 million in unreimbursed costs for treating illegals, with an additional \$113 million in ambulance fees and follow-up medical services.

Mr. Speaker, why, as unintentionally as it may be, are we rewarding brazen lawlessness? During my tenure on the bench as a felony court judge in Houston, Texas, I can recall that approximately 15 to 20 percent of the criminals I sentenced in my court for the most serious felony crimes were illegal immigrants. And while these individuals were doing time in the penitentiary, Texans, Americans no less, were once again paying the price for their incarceration.

Americans pay for the illegal immigration. Americans always pay. As that noted scholar Pogo once said: "We have found the enemy, and it is us." I believe, though, as we continue to heed vital lessons from the tragedy of the September 11 attacks on our soil, that we are making progress in securing our borders from unlawful immigration, while tightening the noose of the perpetrators of senseless violence and terror who harm our citizens.

I commend the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. SENSENBRENNER), chairman of the House Committee on the Judiciary; the gentleman from California (Mr. COX), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee; and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. TOM DAVIS), chairman of the Committee on Government Reform, for their leadership towards these collective goals.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)